

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 9006

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TAGS: PFOR, IR, UR

SUB: SOVIET PRESSURE ON IRAN

REF: (A) TEHRAN 6934, (B) TEHRAN 8487, (C) TEHRAN 8712

1. DURING AUDIENCE FOR SENATOR BIRCH BAYH ON AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 6, SHAH DISCUSSED SOVIET DISAPPROVAL OF IRANIAN ARMS BUILDUP AND REFERRED TO RECENT DEMARCHE ON THIS SUBJECT MADE BY SOVIET AMBASSADOR (REFTEL B). SENATOR BAYH QUICKLY ACKNOWLEDGED HIS AWARENESS OF THIS DEMARCHE INDICATING THAT THE CONTENT OF THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S APPROACH TO THE SHAH HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO HIM IN WASHINGTON BY AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI. IN OTHER WORDS, IT SOUNDED AS THOUGH AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI HAD VISITED THE SENATOR UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO PASS ALONG WHAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD HAD TO SAY TO THE SHAH.

2. THE SHAH THEN TOLD SENATOR BAYH THAT HE HAD BEEN STRUCK BY THE EMPHASIS THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD PLACED ON THE FACT THAT IRAN WAS "BUYING SHIPS". HE EXPLAINED TO THE SENATOR ALONG THE LINES SET FORTH IN REFTTEL (B) WHY HE HAD BEEN STRUCK BY THE EMPHASIS ON THE NAVAL BUILDUP. AT THAT POINT SENATOR BAYH ASKED THE SHAH WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AMERICAN BASE AT DIEGO GARCIA. THE SHAH REPLIED, "I AM IN FAVOR OF THE UNITED STATES DEVELOPING A BASE AT DIEGO GARCIA. I WOULD PREFER TO HAVE NEITHER THE RUSSIANS NOR THE AMERICANS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, BUT IF THE RUSSIANS ARE GOING TO BE THERE, I WANT THE AMERICANS THERE AS WELL."

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THERE FOLLOWED A ROUTINE DISCUSSION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SEA

LANES TRANSITING THE INDIAN OCEAN.

3. SENATOR BAYH ASKED THE SHAH WHAT HE THOUGH THE SOVIETS WOULD DO ABOUT IRAN MODERNIZING ITS MILITARY FORCES. THE SHAH REPLIED, "THE RUSSIANS WILL WAGE 'COLD WAR' AGAINST US. THEY WILL INCREASE THE DIRTY TRICKS TSY ARE PLAYING ON OUR COUNTRY (READ PROPAGANDA, CLANDESTINE AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES). I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT RUSSIANS ARE PREPARED TO ATTACK US FRONTALLY. THEY KNOW THAT WE WOULD RESIST, AND THEY PROBABLY RECOGNIZE THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO BECOME INVOLVED. YOU CAN HARDLY AFFORT TO HAVE THE RUSSIANS ASTRIDE THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ WHERE THEY CAN AT WILL TURN OFF THE OIL SUPPLIES OF WESTERN EUROPE, JAPAN, AND TO AN INCREASING DEGREE, YOURSELVES."

4. THE REMAINDER OF THE CONVERSATION IN THIS GENERAL AREA COVERED THE SAME POINTS WHICH THE SHAH MADE AT HIS

RESS CONFERENCE WITH THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPERMEN AT NOWSHAHR ON AUGUST 6.
HELMS

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